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XIV. Such, then, being the charges brought against the Roman Catholics, by their adversaries, and such being the Defence made by the Roman Catholics to them, will not every candid Protestant admit, that the unfavourable opinion which some still entertain of the civil and religious principles of Roman Catholics, is owing, in a great measure, to prejudice.

But we have the satisfaction to find, that the prejudice against us decreases rapidly. With the mildness and good sense which distinguishes his respectable character, the Earl of Liverpool thus expressed himself, in his speech, in the debate of the House

Bishops of Lincoln and Gloucester, and the envenomed pamphlet attributed to the Bishop of Meath.

B.M.M.

of Lords, on the petition presented by the Irish Catholics in 1810:

"I have heard allusions made this night, to doctrines which I do hope no man now believes the Catholics to entertain: nor is there any ground for an opinion, that the question is opposed under any such pretence. The explanations which have been given on this head, so far as I know, are completely satisfactory, and the question, as it now stands, is much more narrowed than it was on a former discussion." (See his Lordship's Speech, printed and published by Keating and Booker.)

How very little beyond this declaration, and a legislative enactment in consequence of it, do the Roman Catholics solicit!

CHARLES BUTLER.

Lincoln's-Inn, February 5, 1813.

MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

ON the 2d of March, Mr. Grattan's motion for a full consideration of the Catholic claims, after occupying the House of Commons for four whole evenings, was finally carried by a majority of 40 votes. The Catholics of the Empire are, at length, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, about to enter *into a course of actual adoption*. From the protracted sufferings of the penal code; from the mitigated persecution, and insufferable contumely inherent in the term, Toleration; from transmitted antipathies, and recent obloquy; criminal imputations of the past time, and libels of the day, this class of our Christian community, are now about to emerge into the valuation of citizens, and the co-heritage of the Constitution. Deliverance from penalties is but half-citizenship. To be members of a free state, men must be entitled to all its honours and rewards; and 'it is only in the exercise, and through the fair distribution of political privileges, that

they themselves ever can become sensible, or, what is perhaps more material, that *others* will ever become sensible of their being an integral portion of the *common-wealth*. For, there is a persecution of *opinion* that lingers often, for a longer or shorter period, after the abolition of actual and overt oppression; a crimination of suspicion which can be abrogated, and annihilated, not so much by enactment of law, as by a candid and customary intercommunion of Protestants with Catholics, in all the higher as well as the lower offices of the state. We hail the day when Catholics, like Protestants, will become subjects of the state, not *subjected to the state*, a momentous distinction!

In looking back on the progress made in this great question, we contemplate with pleasure its successive steps, and its uniform acceleration. In little more than 20 years from the year 1790, that gloomy era when Lord Westmoreland, who we believe

still clings to the cabinet, was Viceroy of Ireland; when the Catholic petition was not able even to get admittance into an Irish Parliament, and not a single member could be found to present it; when a Catholic deputation was turned away from the Castle without even the ceremony of an answer; when a paper was returned to the Catholics of Cork, in which they had expressed a hope of some relaxation being made of the penal laws, with a desire to strike out the clause which expressed a *hope*, and then the paper should be received; in little more than 20 years from that time, when, on the opposite side, the town of BELFAST, (we wish to call this to its recollection, as possibly the benefactor may have forgotten the favours it once conferred,) when Belfast was the first Protestant community of Ireland that applied to Parliament for complete Catholic Emancipation, and by doing so, demonstrated their political sagacity, and their early liberality; in this intervening space of time, has this great question of political justice, and provident policy, worked its way, until the Legislature of the Empire, instructed by the temper of the times, warned by the signs of the times, impelled by the calamities of the times, are, in the year 1813, and nineteenth of the war, about to unite these islands, and to rally the scattering energies of these countries, just before it might have proved too late.

We do congratulate the British Empire, which ever since the period of *union* by law, has been (we seriously and solemnly aver it,) grown more and more *disunited* in fact; which, in this portion of the Empire, has been gradually, but not slowly, becoming more and more exclusively Catholic, not merely in the proportion of its teeming population, but in the constant accession of property,

not merely commercial and moveable, but *solid* and *territorial*, and the as constant diminution of the Protestant landed interest, by expatriation of *person* and of *property*, the former fascinated by the pleasures, or, as they would pretend, by new duties to the Capital, the latter crumbling insensibly away, and shifting into other hands; we do, therefore, congratulate the *Empire*, that its Legislature, or at least the most influential part of it, has, with a forecast and sagacity suitable to the exigency, begun to counteract the increasing malady of Protestant emigration, by a timely incorporation of the Catholics into the primary offices and duties of the commonwealth. Thus, in the event, weaning *them also* from an exclusive attachment to this island, and its consequent exclusive *appropriation*.

The habitual speculation with respect to seats in Parliament, has grown into a destructive lottery, in what is called genteel life, not less ruinous to patrimonial fortune, (except in a few instances,) than it turns out to personal reputation. In despite of all the moral magnetism of Maria Edgeworth, the Protestant gentry in their feelings, (false feelings!) in their fortunes, (failing fortunes!) and in their families, (fashion hunting families!) will continue to migrate across the channel, and at last will hang so loosely to their country, by any of the aforesaid ties, that a little shake will *dislocate* them altogether. The Catholics would remain; and cling, as their disposition has always led them, to IRELAND, with a more rooted self-interest, as well as affection, with solid and stationary property, as well as sincere patriotism.

If, indeed, the learned and eloquent Mr. Plunket will permit us to cultivate any *Hibernicism*, who is himself, like his friend Ponsonby and

the party, become excellent Englishmen, born, and we believe, bred in Ireland. Complimented, as this push-in political lawyer has been on all sides, even fawned upon by the same Lord Castlereagh, who we once heard, in the Irish house, ridiculing this same Mr. Plunket, for opposing the Union in a manner as if he was speaking from his *brief*, he must permit us, at the hazard of being called a desperate party, to cultivate and to consecrate the attachment to our native land, *political* as well as personal, an attachment which, we think, wonder as he may, most perfectly compatible with the only sure principles of Union, and most consistent with the present wise consolidation of the Empire. Indeed, we think the support of this strong predilection among the *higher* classes, where it is fast decaying, to be the only means of long maintaining this consolidation; and the moment when final adjustment is proclaimed, when at the same moment Ireland will, probably, sink from its present high consideration in the cabinet, and when it becomes as nothing, a political nonentity, in the eyes of our passenger politicians, that will be the period, be it soon or late, when repulsion may be found infinitely stronger than attraction, and consolidation, by a mighty arm, may be broken into dust. Cultivate the Empire, but cherish your country. Never, under any circumstances of state necessity, forget or forsake her.

We avow it, we recoil at the idea of this Island ever being so merged and melted down into British Empire, as Wales and Scotland are. There is a self-valuation, there are inherent rights, there is an inseparable sovereignty of nature, and of geographical distinction, in the present instance, which ought to be held, and never parted with, as being

a future means of rescuing our country, not perhaps from the repetition of ancient oppression, but from modern indignity and insult. In the union of individuals, there is a reserved right of repelling those wrongs, and even those indignities which cancel the vows of obedience; and we have just seen a striking example of this in the magnanimity, and independent dignity of character and conduct displayed by one of the first personages in these Kingdoms. Ireland in *her* union, and in her emancipation, a second union, (we trust more perfect than the first,) ought, throughout her whole people, to remember what she was, what she is, and what she may become, if her leading men should migrate like Moira; and if it should happen (a great improbability we allow,) that Mr. Plunket, as an Irishman, *would* chance to be what Dr. Duigenan is, We honestly declare, we think the Catholics of Ireland more attached to their country, as country, than the Protestants; for that adherence we dearly love them; and we hope, yet with considerable fears, that, when adopted into the fullness of imperial privileges, they will not forget the little island in the great Empire, and by becoming members of the state, part with this independence, or, if you please, *insularity* of character and conduct, that, without being inconsistent with union, will guard them, in future, from neglect, and insult, and all that mass of minor ill-treatment, which humiliates a country into worse than hewers of wood and drawers of water. The personal spirit of Irishmen, often overflowing in the individual, will be of the greatest advantage, when translated into their public and political character; and the Catholics will never, we hope, either as private men, or as political trustees, emigrate from their country, the home of their hearts.

the bed of their ancestors, and the cradle of their children.

The late debate so ably conducted, and with argument on the one side, so eloquent and incontrovertible, has published a great lesson and lecture on the true principles of social economy. It has preached to the *pulpit* not less than to the congregation. It has instructed the Catholic; it has liberalized the Protestant; and has enlightened these nations: The English are a miscellaneous race of people. They consist of several classes (we were about to call them *casts*;) of extremely distinct character and attainments. The labouring and manufacturing cast, most busily and incessantly occupied (until of late,) in hereditary employments, and in their respective divisions of labour live very comfortably, very selfishly, and never sending their minds much farther than their machinery, as artizans or husbandmen, are very ignorant, ill-informed, and consequently illiberal, as we think, in politics, but greatly more so in matters of religion. They hug "the old woman" to the heart; and early prejudices are transmitted unimpaired from the fathers to the children.

It is long before liberality in religious subjects, when such subjects are unfortunately mixed with matters of public policy, can penetrate through this *opaque* class. This order of society is, in the mean time, at the mercy of those professional descriptions of men whose interests are, or appear to be, contradistinguished to those of the social union.

The clergy, in particular, are eager to stand forth as leaders of the Protestant crusade, and as they have, in a great degree, lost the habits of intimate intercourse with the body of the lower people, they are assisted in their operations and instigations, by the light infantry of Methodism, the Cossacs of the establish-

ment. These irregulars of the church, pierce through and through the mass of the people, not however forcing them from this, or that particular fold, but making them their own, under the *accustomed* denominations. This missionary spirit, or, according to their own phraseology, this "shaking of the dry bones throughout the land," has been countenanced and connived at by past and present administration of government, for the purpose of weaning the people from political concerns, and also for its great saving of professional labour, not to the dignitaries, who are by their station exempted from such operose duties, but to the minor functionaries of the established church. And thus, on this late occasion, as on most others, the Evangelical ministry has been auxiliar to the ends and motives of the regular clergy, by mixing with the people of the aforesaid class, for the purpose of cultivating social antipathies, (if we dare make use of such a strange conjunction of terms,) and of making the enmities of history, hereditary and immortal. It has been truly said, that many people have got just enough of religion to make them hate each other, but not the quantity necessary to make them love each other; and if this be doubted with regard to individuals, it is certainly a matter of melancholy fact, in the different divisions of Christianity. How far this unnatural bias of *modern* society has been owing to the doctors of the church, and how much is to be attributed to the disciples, the great Author of our benevolent and beneficent religion, will one day determine.

On the other extreme of society, the highest class or cast (and one of the highest in that class,) appear in the progress of this Catholic question, to preserve a sort of neutrality, a liberty of indifference which fluctu-

ates with the stream of events, and may be impelled hither, or thither, according to the circumstances of the times. They have a lazy, luxurious *liberality* on this, as upon every other topic, and when the pressure of affairs positively demands a Parliamentary opinion, it is possible, nay probable that they will squander it to a *good purpose*.

Mr. Pitt himself, however superior in talents, was of this class or cast; and it is truly diverting to see one of his confidential friends in the upper house, declaring the great man's sentiments on Catholic Emancipation to be most adverse, and another of his confidential friends, in the lower house, declaring his sentiments to be always most friendly to the measure; and what is the deduction? What but this? That this chameleon of contingencies had no formed opinion of his own, or if he had, could lock it up from his nearest and dearest friends in the close and cold recess of his heart; what but this? that the *vane* of his judgment was stationary, or was turned about by impulse from abroad, and that, like most of his pupils, he persevered most positively in a restrictive and intolerant system; but when the winds rose, ("curus, notus que ruunt,") he, followed too in this by his most favourite pupil, could veer about in the same instant, and proclaim to all the crew, that he was now about to enter, with a prosperous gale, and streamers flying, into the *long destined* harbour, the home of his hopes, and the accomplishment of his wishes.

Nor is it less diverting to contemplate this same pupil of Mr. Pitt, now become managing minister in the House of Commons, balancing himself, as it were, upon the tight rope; keeping his eye firmly fixed upon the point of promotion; his speech, when leaning a little on one

side, dexterously regaining a counterbalance on the other, and the clause which begins every sentence, sure to be succeeded by a qualifying *But*, or a moderating *Yet*, which holds both hearer and speaker in uncertainty about the final vote, or the terminating decision. Indeed the consequence of this minister's ambiguous system of conduct has been such, that all his connexions in the North of Ireland have been kept in a most singular puzzle; his nearest relatives and friends out of the house have been endeavouring, by every effort, to promote Anti-Catholic petitions, while their head and leader in the house was preparing his speech for Catholic conciliation. We think, in this disagreeable uncertainty, the shrewd countryman acted most wisely who subscribed the petition in favour of the Catholics with his right hand, and a day or two after, willing to please all parties, subscribed the Anti-Catholic petition with his *left*.

But there is a *class of men* in England, chiefly appertaining to the middle ranks, or perhaps more strictly, in a superior station, above the trammels of profession, literary, liberal, intelligent in the true principles of political economy, who have deemed it their duty to seek in all ways for the best information respecting Ireland, and have gained it, often from books, not seldom from ocular inspection. These men have drank in the light, and have given it out again to others.

From these centres of influence, information has radiated throughout all quarters, except into the imperious Duigenan dungeon, in which darkness seems not so much the mere absence of light, as a positive and active element of tenebrification. The press, great multiplier of mind, has contributed its generous and persevering efforts, to the fullest and fairest discussion of the subject; and,

surely, if the Catholics of the Empire, and particularly of Ireland, should ever unwittingly or wilfully drop the recollection of their numberless obligations to the liberal press of Scotland, of England, and of Ireland, and the consequent extraordinary progression of their cause, they will justly be accounted the most ingrateful, and disgraceful of mortal men.

No—whatever be your fate, or future fortunes, whether patronized by the Perceval administration, or warmed at length with “a new era” in effect as well as promise, you will not forget the constant and consistent “FRIENDS OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,” the Protestant Dissenters of England, who, founding your emancipation on a square and solid basis, have petitioned for a repeal of all penal laws in matters of religion, in such manner that all classes of his Majesty’s subjects may equally participate the rights of Britons, and the blessings of the constitution, while their committee of deputies have circulated at their own expence the concise, yet comprehensive Catholic address to the Protestants of the Empire.* It is such speeches, and such writing, such resolutions, and such actions, which have added so much weight and velocity, so great a moral momentum and political importance to your cause.

The exclusive PROTESTANT UNION, on the other hand, with Granville Sharp at their head, and consisting almost wholly of the established church, cannot bring itself to recognize the rights of conscience in their full extent, which (strange as to this intolerant union it must appear,) the present principles of Catholics lead them to admit, whatever may be the

national religion of the country, or more properly the religion of the state. The fact is, that neither the church of England, nor the kirk of Scotland, nor the church of Rome, (as churches,) recognize the indefeasible right in all classes to follow the dictates of their consciences in worshipping God. The English church continues in her articles, and retains the canons and censures of the church of Rome, and the kirk of Scotland falls not behind either in its partialities and its comminations.

The Protestant Dissenter who acknowledges no human authority in matters of religious faith, and who recognizes alone the supremacy of Christ in his word, the *New Testament*, cannot refrain from smiling at this rivalry, and endless contention of churches mutually exclusive, and every one wishing to devour the other. He comforts himself with the thought, that the *Christian*, wherever he meets him, in the fens of Lincolnshire, or in the mountains of Scotland, or in the bogs of Ireland, is better than his church. The church stands still: man walks forward, and in spite of Calvin, in spite of Luther, and in spite of the Pope, he holds out his hand to his neighbour, and his countryman. The Protestant Dissenter hopes most sincerely, that both the Protestant and the Catholic churches, both the established and the excluded church may, in the progress of discussion, be benefited by the mildening of their spirit, and the moderating of high pretensions; that they may begin to remove obstacles, rather than throw them in the way of men, through all the intercourse of civil life; and that the clergy of both churches may be more anxious to bring the laity more closely together, than to keep them asunder, suspecting and suspected. The Protestant Dissenter, Calvinistic in his discipline, but in his doctrine as

* For this interesting address see page 241.

far removed from that excluding and persecuting reformer, as the heavens are from the earth.* deprecates the idea of making religion the instrument of civil monopoly, and political ascendancy, and is anxious, for others as well as for himself, that all men who perform the *duties* of citizens should receive civic honours and rewards, in fair and impartial distribution. The Protestant Dissenter has no design or desire to disturb the established church in the quiet and secure enjoyment of their revenues: but he wishes that it should be *satisfied* with their millions, and not stand in the way of a participation of the *civil* as well as ecclesiastical state. In fine, he wishes for Catholic emancipation; and he thinks, as we think, that the security which, *at last*, will be found safest and most effectual, is the short and explicit oath of allegiance, binding enough upon all who are obedient to the sanctions of an oath, and for those who believe that the Catholic religion can dispense with that obligation, it is absolutely impossible that either now or *ever* they can be satisfied; and eternal controversy, and civil dissention must, in this case, be the portion and inheritance of this wretched island.

But certain we are, that the Catholics will not object to any collateral security or regulation, consistent with *their continuing to be Catholics*, which may unite all parties, and pluck "the old woman" even from the hearts of the most prejudiced, that of Dr. Duigenan always to be excepted. Whatever may more effectually recognize "the act of settlement," and the per-

manence of the Church of England, as by law of the land established, we should suppose they would willingly accede to, and it must appear strange if all the law authorities in the house, and out of the house, be not able to contrive some limitations in the office of Chancellor, which, whatever be his religion, may secure the rights and immunities of the Protestant church.

We would even go farther, and say, that all *secret* communication with a foreign power, temporal or spiritual, is, at the least, a suspicious circumstance, and inconsistent with the first law of society, the public safety; that all such intercourse should be "in aperto" and cognizable by the civil authorities of the state, without there being, in this public and salutary precaution, any necessity incurred of abandoning that Spiritual Supremacy which is a cardinal principle of Catholic Faith. Nor, do we imagine, that the domestic nomination of Bishops by Chapter or otherwise, is incompatible with that canonical investiture by the head of the Catholics on earth, which, in their estimation is necessary to preserve the unity of the church, and the Apostolic transmission of its superintendents. Upon the whole, the principle of Catholic Emancipation being granted, any difficulties in the *mode* will, we trust, be overcome by the spirit of conciliation, and the glorious result will be that increase of liberty, which is consequent upon a more equal distribution of political power, and a mutual confidence, instead of that *misunderstanding* between its different parts, which has been so long the shame and sorrow of the British Empire. In fact, liberty is power, property is power, social security is power, and the combination of these must be necessarily attended with political power, or they must be

* "Let not my weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe."

[*The Catholic prayer of Pope, a Roman Catholic, or if you like, a Papist.*]

fruitless and unavailing, precarious, and conditional, a ministerial suffrance, and a toleration, from persecution happening to be in a fit of good humour.

Without any personal dislike to any of the present ministry, we cannot give that part of it most favourable to this salutary measure, much more credit for this act, than for the repeal of the Orders in Council. Mr. Pitt's act of Union was more an Anglo-gallican measure, than with any primary intencion of benefiting Ireland, either immediately or eventually; and the successors of Mr. Pitt have been *propelled* into emancipation, as a means of disengaging a large portion of the disposable force of Great Britain, and employing the garrison of Ireland on the continent of Europe. Lord Liverpool has declared; that *every* disposable battalion had been sent to the Peninsula. We will not question the *military* disposition; but we see nothing of grand political justice or generosity, nothing of comprehensive statesman-like solicitude for the public happiness, in their cold and stammering assent to the auspicious event of the day. Their names will never be handed down to posterity as even willing co-partners in this illustrious act of national policy.

To whom are these honours reserved? To many of all religious denominations. But far above them all, to that great and good man, who, throughout this arduous business, has led his countrymen, his exiled and *aliened* countrymen, "in the way," whose benignant genius has given them "light" through their long pilgrimage; and whose life has been lengthened by Providence, for its kindest purposes. "He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

"*Fortunate Senex!*" In the ra-

diant morning of his life, he created Protestant Ireland; under God, a chief instrument of her freedom and independence. Notwithstanding the most heroic resistance on his part, it was afterwards lost by the most base and ever memorable venality and corruption. Yet, through long and severe anxieties, he did not despair; and, at length, in the evening of his days, is about to accomplish the regeneration of Catholic Ireland, and the conciliation of the British Empire. I saw thee once during the period of these anxieties, in the year 1798, (the when and where need not be more particularly mentioned,) the animation of thy countenance was fled, thy eyes were closed in short and agitated slumbers, all thy features seemed harrowed by gloomy anticipations of the miseries about to fall upon thy native land, a face not so much marked by years, as by public care, and the calamities of the times; I gazed upon that face with the sympathy of a man, and the sensibilities of an Irishman; and I silently prayed, that you might be reserved by gracious Providence for the future salvation of your suffering country. The season of sorrow and tribulation is past. "*Fortunate Senex!*" Your country is about to hail you, a second time, her great Deliverer; and perhaps, (O! glorious perhaps!) before the angel of death shall call you to still higher honours, you will achieve a third victory, more important than even the former two, and by leading the way to Parliamentary Reform, redeem the virtue, the purity, and the *popularity* of the British Constitution.

Never shall we cease to repeat, that Catholic Emancipation understood and practiced merely as an adoption into the abuses and corruptions of the Constitution, will neither add, in the event, to the glory, or

the true interest, nor to the *moral* melioration of the people. Until the *mask* be thoroughly cleansed, the new addition will assimilate with the old lees, "et quodcunque infundis, acescet." No, no! it is not by entering into the Constitution as into the participation of a rotten borough; it is not by your Catholic nobility becoming electors of the representative Peers in Parliament, or being themselves elected into that representation, it is not thus that the usurpation of nobility over the franchises of the people, and the servile feudality of those nick-named *Free-holders*, will be abated, a national nuisance, that smells in the nostrils. It is not by countenancing and conniving at, if not encouraging, a most disgraceful system of disguised patronage and ingenious perjury, through the different links of which the Social Body, from its highest members to the lowest, is kept chained, not by duties, not by affections, not by the exchange of honourable services, but by a reciprocity of selfish interests, and shameful servilities; in short, by a *soul selling* system, that makes the very boast and distinction of our Constitution become the poison of private life, and the bane of morality. No, no! it is not by being thus adopted into corrupt familiarity with such a system; it is not by being admitted among the ten or twelve *burgesses*, which, in *thirteen* places, return as the wealthiest or most populous towns, or which, in other *thirteen* places, return, as directed, men to Parliament whom they never saw, and who never saw Ireland; it is not, in short, by a rapid conformity with such political doctrine or practice, that the Catholics of Ireland will secure the future confidence of honest men, or even gain any credit for their past conduct.

"It is time enough to talk in this manner, when we become co-partners in the fullness of the Constitution.

Then we shall show how we shall use it." Perhaps this is as it ought to be, at least, it is very prudent and very politic conduct; but we must confess our fault, or our folly, that in matters of this sort, we are extremely suspicious and distrustful, and we own, that nothing could have given us more sincere gratification, than some authoritative declaration on the part of the Catholics, as to their sentiments on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. "Would you have us to repel Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Canning, and Mr. Wiltberforce, and my Lord Wellesley, and my Lord Grenville, and my Lord Grey, all good men and true, would you have us repel such advocates of our cause, to gain a speech from Sir Francis Burdett, or a paper from Mr. Cobbett?" Certainly *not*. Well, we will wait with patience, but with hope; at times sinking into doubt, oftener rising into confidence. The Catholics of Ireland will save their country—a great praise. They will save the British Empire, by assisting in the regeneration of the British Constitution—a still more extended glory! Blessed then, we say, thrice blessed! be that day, when Catholic Emancipation will be ratified by the law of the land, as it is already by the right reason of the community, the true policy of the state, and the genuine spirit of the Christian religion.

As a mark characteristic of the present tone of public opinion, and as a proof that "on evil days, and evil tongues, we have fallen," it may be mentioned, that the expositors of public abuses are more subject to popular odium, than the persons whose vices they attempt to hold up to view, and to public investigation. This retroversion of public sentiment manifests a morbid action, and an unsound state of health. It arises from a false, mistaken apprehension, and, with not a few, from a

sympathy with knaves, the result of a conscious feeling of deserving similar censure, and a wish to make vice popular, that their own defects may escape unnoticed in the crowd. Men who have "crimes unwhipt of justice," affect moderation, and generally take the part of the justly accused, against the honest exposers. It is a bad omen of the times, and augurs ill for the progress of virtuous reform, for thus, in the public mind, the distinctions between vice and virtue are removed, and an open is made for a general and wide-spreading profligacy of manners.

The investigation into the conduct of the Princess of Wales, excites much of the public interest, probably more than the intrinsic merit of the case deserves. Indeed, public curiosity is more tickled by the pruriency of the subject, than is symptomatic of a healthy state of sound morals. The details are nauseating, and to the eye and ear of modesty disgusting in the extreme. They clearly add another irrefragable argument, to prove that the vices of the great are as glaring, and as bad as those "of the lowest, aye the veriest bunter."* On the male side, there have been the most notorious violations of the marriage contract, and a desertion of the protection due to a wife. To speak most favourably, and with the utmost stretch of charity, the levities and indiscretions on the part of the female have been great. When the matter first became the subject of so general conversation, some thought that a full disclosure was necessary, to satisfy the public mind, but when at length it came out, the grossness of the detail shocked all delicacy. In one of the Debates on the subject, well indeed might Stuart Wortley†

declare, "*He was sorry we had a family who do not take warning from what is said and thought concerning them. They seemed to be the only persons in the country who were wholly regardless of their own welfare and respectability. He would not have the Regent lay the flattering unction to his soul, and think his conduct will bear him harmless through those transactions!*" The Bourbons ought to afford an awful warning to Princes. They ran their career of unblushing profligacy, unawed by public censure, and in the arrogance of imaginary greatness, totally disregarded it. We have witnessed the catastrophe. Notwithstanding the unmerited encomium of the venal Burke, we know that Marie Antoniette was profligate and immoral, and the vices of the Count D'Artois transgressed all appearance of decency. Many causes have been supposed to have contributed to produce the French Revolution. Two, however, appear to have been chiefly, if not solely operative. The profligacy of Princes and the higher ranks, and the derangement of the finances. It would be gratifying to the votaries of philosophy, to suppose its mild genius contributed to the event, by diffusing knowledge, and causing men to know and to practice their duties, and their rights; but, alas! the stilling voice of philosophy is little heard or attended to, in the turmoils of a revolution, or in the profligate orgies of a court. The fall of the higher ranks, from their own misconduct, in public opinion, and the weight of taxes, and the difficulties coming home to "men's business and bosoms" relating to property, are more effective causes in promoting revolutions, and rousing the passions, than the more pure and moderating sentiments of genuine philosophy.

Men belonging to parties have

* It is not intended thus unqualifiedly to characterize the Princess. The remark is designed as applicable to high life in general.

† The brother of our Irish Primate.

been greatly perplexed by the changes and shiftings which have taken place, since the investigation commenced in 1806. Then the Fox and Grenville administration held the reins. Commissioners selected from their ranks pronounced the Princess of Wales innocent of the main charge, but censured her for indiscretions. The men then in opposition, Lord Eldon, Perceval, and Plomer, the present Attorney-General, incited her to remonstrate against the condemnation in the latter part of the report, and afterwards when they returned to power, by a minute of council, they fully exonerated her. Indeed, it has been shrewdly suspected, that they turned this event to their own advantage, and flattered the King by a compliancy with his opinions or prejudices on this subject, as one of the terms to facilitate their return to office. In the pantomimic dance of statesmen, the survivors of those men, now the ministers of the Regent, are uncomfortably hampered by their former decision; and while disposed to go all lengths to please their present master, are, if the public were justly discriminating of the characters of public men, forfeiting all claim to public confidence, by their versatile and whiffling conduct. The honest and intelligent Samuel Whitbread stands forward on high and honourable ground, in the House of Commons, not as the champion of the Princess, but the assertor of public justice, and demands that she should be either acquitted, or her guilt clearly proved, not by dark insinuations, but by clear proof, publicly investigated. Contrasted with his honourable manner, Lord Castlereagh's puny and wavering conduct in the house, to-day conceding, and to-morrow, most pusillanimously, or courtier-like, retracting his concessions, affords a deep shade. He

always has his two strings to his bow. Whitbread characterizes his language as so indecisive, and so furnished with evasions, as to be so really unintelligible, that either his meaning cannot be discovered, or perhaps rather he dextrously escapes from his meaning of yesterday, to make room for the introduction of his meaning of to-day.

Let us turn to a subject nearer home, and congratulate the Editor of the Belfast Commercial Chronicle on the verdict of a jury in his favour, in an action for damages, at the last assizes for the County of Antrim, at Carrickfergus, for a supposed libel on the Captain of a vessel, which was captured on her passage from the West Indies. As friends to a free press we congratulate him on his deliverance, as having acted within the bounds of the legitimate exercise of a free press. It would be desirable if in all cases the conductors of the press understood and exercised its prerogatives in a firm decided manner, without crouching to the minions of power, or too cautiously seeking to gain public favour, by the vain attempt to please all, both the good and the bad. In the present case, the Editor of the Chronicle discharged his duty with propriety. In the first instance, a justification of the conduct of the Captain, signed by a number of the mariners, was published, in opposition to reports circulated by the mate, who replied by an affidavit; and for publishing this affidavit, an action was brought, although it appears the Editor offered to insert a contrary statement, if properly authenticated; but with great propriety refused to write any thing on the subject as from himself. May every attempt to shackle the liberty of the press meet with a similar issue!

At length that system of money jobbing, dignified by the name of Pitt's *solid system of finance*, is ap-

proaching to its end : time has proved how much it was miscalculated, and how little it was entitled to its pompous name. Pitt, by a fallacy, a procedure in which he much delighted, for a time gave an appearance of fancied security to the public creditor, by adopting the delusive system of a sinking fund to pay off the national debt, by thousands, or tens of thousands, while he was borrowing by millions. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, Vansittart, a plain, practical man, a financier, without being a statesman, dissipates the charm, and proposes to apply the surplus of this sinking fund to answer the exigencies of the next four years, so that he may not for that length of time be under the necessity of imposing additional taxes on the inhabitants of Great Britain, who are thus likely to get a happy reprieve for that period. Ireland has yet to learn its fate on the score of fresh taxes, although additional taxation on us may be considered as almost certain. The public creditor really loses no security, by the application of this sinking fund to the current expenses: he had only the shadow, or an unsubstantial dream of possessing it. The sinking fund in time of war, and when large loans were making, resembled on a great scale the conduct of a profligate spendthrift, who was annually adding mortgages on his estate, already incumbered to an amount beyond the value of the fee simple, but at the same time to delude his creditors with the appearance of security, and perhaps a dupe himself to his own artifices, borrowed a few additional thousands to pay off old scores, while his real debts were increased by this means to the full amount, both of the old and new ones. Similar, when stripped of all disguises, and the imposing plausibilities of Pitt was his vaunted sys-

tem of finance. By stripping off the covering, Vansittart unintentionally renders a great service to the public. The people may now have a better view of their real situation.

With respect to foreign affairs, it has been truly said by a great authority, that the effect of the late campaign in the *Peninsula* has not approximated us to the object, but removed us from it. Such an alternation of advancing and retreating, such a strange commixture of victory without success, and retreat without discomfiture, was never before exemplified, and the general effect appears to be a continual exhaustion of men and money, a repeated bleeding and a perpetual drain. One political party, that of Lord Wellesley, (to which the Lords Grey and Grenville are now wishing to adhere,) would ascribe the *misfortunes* of the campaign solely to the want of the necessary means being supplied by ministry: while the ministry expatiate on the *glories* of the campaign, yet hint that the siege of Burgos was undertaken without any communication of Lord Wellington's intentions, and without any perfect knowledge on his part of its means of defence. By Lord Wellesley it is asserted, that the addition of 15,000 men before the battle of Salamanca would have enabled the allied army to drive the French across the Ebro; and by the ministry it is acknowledged, that half a million could scarcely be spared, and that every disposable battalion had been sent to the *Peninsula*. But the most singular circumstance in this singular war, of purse rather than of person, is, "that the French army was paid with English gold." While coin, that necessary commodity in foreign circulation, became so scarce or so dear, that Lord Wellington's retreat was, in part, the consequence, the bullion of England, by means of the licensed

trade, was actually employed to pay the French forces operating against us, and England has furnished her enemy not only with money, but various other means of carrying on hostility, such as salt-petre, hides, sheet copper, sulphur, &c. The depression of the exchange was such, that the government agents from different places were pitted against each other, and the price they were allowed to give for dollars was always lowest where most wanted, so that the Sicilian or Maltese agent at 6s. 4d. or 6s. 3d. could carry off the whole supply at Lisbon, where the price was only 5s. 8d. There was a loss in drawing bills of 23 or 24 per cent., that is to say, a loss of upwards of 3 millions upon 15 millions. Had the army been of larger amount, the loss must necessarily have been in greater proportion, even to one half, while in the mean time, commerce on the continent was cut off, and an annual export of 12 millions to America also suspended, which had been the only means that enabled us to meet such enormous expenditure. In all this, we see plainly not only a necessary and nearly definable limit to our military operations in Spain, but also the actuating motive of Napoleon, in, as it were, husbanding a war, that occasions on our part such ruinous prodigality. His double aim has been to contract our means, and to increase our expenditure, and had not Russia broke the circle of exclusion, his end had been accomplished.

The continental system of exclusion appears broken, as soon as the circle is about to be completed, and such is the uncertainty of treaties of alliance between the European powers, that Lord Wellesley says, "so early as *May*, 1811, the Emperor of Russia, who a short time before ratified the treaty at Tilsit, with Napoleon, had foreseen a rup-

ture with France, and was preparing his means of aggression." In these, he was anticipated by Bonaparte, but the casualties of the campaign have extended the Russian arms even to the Oder; in consequence of the defection of the Prussian auxiliaries, all that kingdom, even to Berlin, has been laid open to the incursion of the Russians, with the exception of Dantzic, which is itself stated to be in danger. Hamburgh is said to be deserted by the French, and that great commercial entrepot again set at liberty, while a general spirit of insurgeucy prevails throughout the North, against the French power. Sweden has entered into alliance with Britain, and is to commence operations, in conjunction, on the Southern shores of the Baltic. Denmark is about to be compelled into this new Northern coalition, if she be able to erase the capture of Copenhagen and her fleet, from her memory.* New treaties of subsidy are signed; new combinations planned; while Austria is about to propose her mediation, nothing is heard of but warlike preparations; and France is mustering the utmost

* The ministerial London papers have for some time been in the habit of representing Denmark as entering into the views of the Northern powers, in the present scheme of hostility to France. Later accounts throw doubts on those flattering deceptions so often practised by the venal part of the press, on a credulous and culpable people. Denmark will not probably so soon forget British aggression, in her attack on the capital and fleet, nor relinquish the jealousy entertained towards the neighbouring powers of Russia and Sweden. Contiguity of situation is seldom a bond of amity among nations, and Denmark may refuse to act to promote British interests, although expected by a nation, which often in its pride of heart, appears to consider all the world made for its benefit. It is now said, that Norway, wrested from Denmark, and given to Sweden, is to be the price of the latter's aid.

strength of her vast empire, to regain what she has lost, and to drive back what she calls the incursion of the barbarians of the North.

Napoleon has asserted, that the English Cabinet offered the finest provinces of France to Austria, as the price of her defection; he adheres to the possession of Spain; speaks only of making Russia retire within her own territories, without recurring to the continental system; yet, at the same time, he takes care to congratulate America, on her assertion of the principle, that the flag covers both the merchandize and "the crew," and that neutrals ought to be exempt from all paper blockades. In his concordat with the Pope, to whom he assigns revenue, without describing his place of residence, it is to be remarked, that he himself nominates to all bishopricks, save sixteen, and that, after the lapse of six months, canonical investiture is made imperative on the part of the Pope. He allows the spiritual supremacy, but retains all the temporal authority, and reconciles his independence as a King, to his deference for the head of the Catholic Church.

The disastrous effects of the American war are partly exhibited in the following statement, posted at Lloyd's on Patrick's day.

BRITISH VESSELS CAPTURED BY THE AMERICANS,	
Between the 4th August and 30th December, 1812,.....	391
Between the 1st January and 9th March, 1813,.....	122
	513
RECAPTURED,—between 4th August, 1812, and 9th March, 1813,.....	80
	431

Within our own immediate circle, the capture of the *Fame*, from Belfast to Bristol, by an American pri-

vateer, brings the effects of this war more home to ourselves, and ought to awaken our feelings in opposition to an impolitic war, and make us unanimous in calling for a return of peace.

The Java frigate has been lately added to the list of American triumphs at sea, which, in their view, will probably more than compensate their repeated defeats at land. The Americans appear to be as expert in the inglorious work of slaughter at sea, as the boasted tars of the British fleet. Haughty Britain may yet rue the day, which, in defence of neutral rights, and to prevent the impressment of her citizens, forced America into the trial of strength.

The bill introduced into Congress, to prohibit the employment of foreign seamen in their navy, appears to be intended to open a door for reconciliation, by setting an example to do towards others, what they require others to do towards them. They consent to forego the employment of British seamen, and ought not the British to adopt an act of like reciprocity towards them? If the Imperial Parliament passed a similar law, a good foundation would be laid for negotiation.

Every thing in this lower world alternates. There is a succession of night and day in all human affairs. That night is sometimes protracted exceedingly, and we long look out for the day-spring from on high. Ireland has, in this respect, been placed as it were in the polar circle; and darkness has continued for six hundred years to overspread the unfortunate land. But we hail the rising rays of the blessed sun. Of a truth, the present entertainment of the Catholic subject by the House of Commons, is the commencement of a new order of things, not merely confined within the strict circle of the question, but naturally and neces-

sarily connected with it, and flowing from it; for nothing is more certain, than that a thousand and a *thousand* abuses in the interior and domestic policy of this country, great and momentous in the mass, but minute in their detail, are the pestilent and viperous offspring of a monstrous mother mischief, (how much longer shall we name it?) the political, and *therefore* civil DISTINCTION, between the two portions of one nation. It is in the womb of this most formidable monster of human policy, that the brood of thousand and thousand abuses, creep and are protected; and, in fact, the state of Ireland has often reminded us of Milton's perhaps revolting description.

"The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul, in many a scaly fold
Voluminous, and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting: about her middle round
A cry of hell-hounds, never ceasing, bark,
With wide Cerberean mouths, full loud,
and rung
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet, there, still bark'd and howl'd
Within, unseen."

But escaping from this horrid portraiture of political persecution, and her numerous progeny, which, we doubt not, will die with the parent Sin; we do trust, that it shall, in no long time, become our pleasing task, to recount, not only the rectification of abuses consequent upon the inordinate waste and misapplication of the public funds, (we shall particularly state those destined to NATIONAL EDUCATION,) but that throughout *all* the departments of public policy, the corporation spirit will be driven off, and CONCILIATION will be suffered to cover the whole people, as the hen covereth her chickens. It is the season of Hope; and we feel it bud

in our hearts. When the vote passed the House of Commons, corruption groaned through all her classes of venality. Even now, she does not despair, that under the guise of friendship, or renewed enmity, she will be able (if not at present to defeat the patriotic purpose,) by degrees to divert it from the ultimate object, and thus disappoint the great end, which is, in fact, the reconciliation of private enjoyment with the public welfare, and the bringing of Ireland *home* to every member of the Island; *home* in the free exercise of his religion, without, *in any way*, suffering from such exercise; *home* in the full and fair employment of his talents, and in the rewards and offices which are at present enjoyed by a more favoured part of the community; *home* in the co-heritage of social rights, in the co-operation of social duties, in the family feeling of kind affections; *home* in the universality of law equally protective, or equally penal; in the just distribution and equiponderance of the constitutional powers, neither absorbed by the crown, nor arrogated by the titled aristocracy; *home* in the reform and restriction of those petty principalities, named grand juries; in the abolition of that feudal influence of landlord over tenant, with respect to their elective franchises, which is so perfectly inconsistent with the spirit of a free Constitution; *home* in rescuing the country from the usurpations of nobility over the privileges of the community, in shortening the duration of Parliament, in making a more full, fair, and free representation of the people, and, in short, by improving the morals, and forming the manners of the nation upon the *model* of a just, a wise, a moral, and, therefore, an all-powerful government. This is the *HOME* for IRISHMEN, and until it be attained, we,

at least, situated wherever we may be, in the country or out of it, shall deem ourselves *expatriated*.

A late voluminous writer, of whom we shall probably give a more particular account, has said, that "in Ulster there is a very strong *Republican party*, but which is over-awed by the superior numbers of the Roman Catholics, who are sincere friends to monarchical government." In this passage, there is abundance of error, however often it is repeated, with the addition, that "their leaders are well known;" that is a softer phrase for being *marked*! We who are neither leaders, nor led in politics, can only say, that we are *not* Republicans, although we have a strong predilection to the Republican part of the British Constitution. However speculatively and abstractly we may admire a Republican form of government, we, by no means,

think it suited to the present state of society in these kingdoms. It is neither fitted for the country, nor is the country suited to it. But although we shall ever advocate a purer representation of the people, we are not, on that account, to be supposed desirous of overturning the present order of things; and we must inform "travellers," that we are not by any means so near to Republicanism, as those who accuse us are to *absolute Monarchy*. Our general principle is, that Government is instituted for the welfare and well-being of the people, and that Governors should be made to know, and feel, the influence of this truth, by legitimate intercourse with the people; and our actuating principle, at the present hour, is, *IRISH CONCILIATION, and BRITISH CONSTITUTION*.

AGRICULTURAL REPORT.

From the 20th February to the 20th March, 1813.

THE weather for several weeks past has been dry, and favourable for the agricultural business of the season. In many of the dry, light soils, considerable progress has been made in sowing oats; and if no obstructing alteration takes place, we may expect to see the principal part of the spring labour accomplished, much earlier than it has been for several years back.

The wheat crops in general look well; and the oats that were sown in autumn, or the beginning of winter, have an encouraging appearance.

The use of iron ploughs seems to gain ground in the estimation of the more intelligent farmers. The mechanic who first introduced them exhibited one at last assizes, for the inspection of the gentlemen of Armagh; and the grand jury generously subscribed a sum of money as a reward for his ingenuity.

Grain and provisions keep pretty stationary for several weeks back, except *flesh meat*, which, from the unusual scarcity of fat cattle, is likely to be high this spring.

COMMERCIAL REPORT

THE depressed and disjunct state of our commerce is clearly evinced by the eagerness, or rather rashness, with which every fresh opening is embraced. A letter from Sir Home Popham raised a species of mania in the commercial world, which broke out in large and unadvised speculations to South America, and ended in loss to many, and ruin to some. In the rage once more to find an *El Dorado*, or a country of gold in South America, vast quantities of manufactures were hurried out to that country, without considering the limited means and want of inclination of the inhabitants to purchase. On the suspension of the Orders in Council last year, improvident exportations took place to the United States of North America, before it was known how that measure, unaccompanied with the relinquishment of the impressment of their seamen, would be taken by that country. War ensued; and many have to lament the effects of their rashness. On some former appearances of an open to the continent, the little rock of Heligoland was so overstocked with British merchandize, that besides losing a market,